SOUTHERLY

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EDITORIAL.

"By what I've heard, 'tis a pleasant, well-bred, complaisant, free, frolic, good-natured, pretty age; and if you do not like it, leave it to us that do."

Hippolita (aged 14) in Wycherley's *Gentleman Dancing-Master.*

LAST year, when the importation of James Joyce's *Ulysses* was stopped by a Minister for Customs suddenly aware of the book, and anxious to protect from its effects the few Australians who might be capable of reading it, a passionate controversy arose. The Church, for the most part, of course came out strongly on the side of the Minister; literary societies, generally advocates of freedom, opposed the ban; while, in between, there were various individual protests and protestations of approval—the upshot being that, although all the rest of the world is free for him to wander in, *Ulysses* still may not land on our shores.

What struck one most in the controversy was not the confusion of æsthetics and morals—which seems inevitable—but the fact that many took the opportunity given to vent their personal dislike of Joyce, and, through him, of modern literature in general. (The term "modern" is here used to cover all literary products of an experimental tendency published since the beginning of the century. Imitations or prolongations of nineteenth-century literature are best regarded as belonging to that time.) The attack on Joyce advanced from his matter to his manner, and he was condemned over again, by vociferous conservatives, as obscure, pretentious, impostrous, and what not. Whether he is one or all or none of these things would take more than a moment to decide. Almost every one of the more progressive of his contemporaries has been similarly abused, very often on extremely slight acquaintance with his work. In some instances, merely the first page of a book has been scanned, then it has been thrown down in disgust; which, surely, reveals a deplorable petulance.

On the other hand, there is the important fact, overlooked or ignored by such self-constituted final judges, that *modern literature is the literature of the young.* As a rule, the young readily understand and appreciate it, and are

prepared to defend it if need be. Modern literature is theirs by right, its atmosphere being that which they themselves breathe. Their opinions are not necessarily true. Indeed, they will be bound to err on the side of enthusiasm; there will be much uncritical exclamation in their comments; they will overrate both books and writers, they will wildly damn, by comparison, those of the past; but since it is mainly on them that new writers depend for sympathy, their responses are worth watching and trying to understand.

Hardly any young student of literature, for example, fails to take readily to Joyce's extra-dimensional use of language. Such a reader enjoys this, proclaims it to others, even imitates it. Nor are the variations of Joyce's narrative method often found to puzzle him. He would certainly never think of condemning Joyce because he does not "tell a story" in the manner of Dickens or Fielding.

The plain fact is that, no matter what attempts are made to fix it to the great masters, literature continues and will probably never end till man does. Writing is an activity of life, and, short of annihilation, nothing can affect its persistence. Inevitably the character of the product will change—not so much because of the desire for novelty as because the material is changing and the methods of treating it are manifold; because, too, each writer is an individual, essentially different from any other. We shall have modern literature whether we like it or not. This in turn will give place to more modern literature; some may even become classic—and so the process goes on. Is not the only sensible thing to do, then, to receive, without prejudice, what is offered? If he condemns, the reader must—out of fairness to the author if on no other account—show valid reasons for his condemnation. Similarly if he praises he should show exactly why he does so. Young enthusiasts are too often content with their own intuitions, and impatient of those who cannot share them. An ideal reader would view the stream of literature dispassionately, doing his best to understand its course. He would clear his mind of all preconceptions before starting to read, and he would think well before expressing his opinion, which in no circumstances should be regarded as a

verdict. If, at last, the term "modern" could be used neutrally—not, on the one side, as a challenge, on the other, as opprobrium—literary discussion would be a very much pleasanter and more profitable business. There is no reason why the modern should be superior to the less modern, or to the old; just as nothing guarantees the permanent superiority of the great works of the past to any that may yet be written. Literature, indeed, is one—variable in texture, but continuous.

READER, STAY!

By the generosity of some few members of the Association and others closely interested, *Southerly* has been enabled to reach its ninth number. It could not have done so, depending on subscriptions and sales alone. At the same time, the reserves of the Association have been heavily drawn upon to continue other publications. Now there is urgent need of financial help. In almost every issue of *Southerly* the need for further support has been stressed; the time has come for a request to every member, every reader, to contribute something—if possible, at once.

Should there be any doubt as to the value of *Southerly,* or of the work that the Association is doing in general, it should be stated now. We may, however, be allowed to claim here at least that the Association is the most active of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, and that, as one of its activities, the publication of *Southerly* has exerted a noticeable influence on the literary life of Australia. Added to its local function is the spread of its reputation abroad, in both England and America. It is, then, an established institution, and as such should, we believe, be maintained at all costs.

A subscription list has therefore been opened, details of which will be found on page 38. Speedy additions are invited. Due acknowledgment will be made in the next issue of *Southerly.*

(Signed) H. L. McLoskey (Chairman of Committee).
H. M. Butterley (Hon. Secretary).
F. T. Berman (Hon. Treasurer).

BETTY MARTIN'S SUMMER SONG.

That losel lad, the throstle . . .
Cock Lorel, Lorelei . . .
He singeth in the laurel;
His song is all my eye.
He singeth of Malvina-may.
He challengeth the merle.
His counterpoint of morganfay,
His charter from the erle,
He chanteth,
lully lully lay
olla, olla Apollo!
Lu-Lugh-Llew-lewd his numbers are . . .
Aye, lads, 'e's fair immoral! . . .
He sayeth myth that seemeth sooth . . .
He singeth as he's able,
And ale from vat and cake from booth
Decanteth to his table.
He'll charm the Dog Star from the skies
To kennel in a fable.
He singeth Pans and Lupercans,
And leaping Kane-loa,
And Calicansars, Leprochans,
And Ka and Tangaroa.
He draws three weavers from one catch . . .
Madge Howlet can no more!
The pallid moons that ply 'o noons
He'll angle to his door . . .
Aye, to his door
And through his door,
To silver o'er his threshing floor.
And so to bed
(It has been said,
A moon-ful bed!)
And, in his head,
A-brewing, brewing, brewing,
Another losel-lorel-lay
To pipe the sun above the spray . . .
(The bosun he of peeping Day . . .
The may, as spray, construing!)
Aye! Aye! In loose and losel way
Another thriftless throstle day,
His lulu with lullee-lullay,
He'll while away a-wooing.

3.vii.'41. PETER HOPEGOOD.

STOUT.

By MARGARET TRIST.

THE old woman swayed backwards and forwards in her rocking chair and looked longingly at the hotel across the road. Listlessly she fanned her face with a large silk handkerchief, then screwed it into a ball and wiped the perspiration from her neck. She unscrewed it, shook it carefully, then went on with her slow fanning.

The house behind her was airless and hot. The veranda offered a measure of coolness. It was narrow and thickly wreathed with vines, so that the corners were quite dark and resounded with the lazy buzzings of mosquitoes. She had left open the back and front doors of the house to create a draught and placed her chair where the vines arched leaving a space above the front steps. Fifty yards away from her, across the dusty road the swing doors of the hotel bar swung invitingly. Below the door there were two pairs of men's legs, and above it cool darkness relieved where a shaft of sunlight glinted on a bottle.

The old woman shook her head slowly and hoped that it wasn't a sin to be longing so utterly and thirstily for a long drink of ice-cold stout. It was many a long summer since she had tasted such a thing. "It's a drink of the devil", she told herself firmly and pursed her wrinkled mouth above her false teeth. "Iniquitous den", she said aloud, and nodded her head towards the hotel. Still she continued to look at it longingly and imagine how the stout would taste trickling down her dry old throat. She thought of how once on such an occasion she would have gone across to the hotel and bought a bottle of stout without hesitation. But in those days she had not known the wickedness of such an act. She sighed and half wished the bad old days back again. Once she had not thought it wicked to drink stout. Of late she had been certain it was. At the moment she was not sure.

"It's very, very wicked", she said firmly and and loudly. She compressed her mouth so that it crinkled into a button of self-righteousness, and held her neck stiff so that her small

head sat virtuously upon it. She tried to find something other than the hotel for her deep sunken eyes to rest upon. But there were only the geranium by the steps and the road where the imprint of hooves showed inches deep in the fine white dust, and the burning blue of the sun-ridden afternoon sky. Out of her range of vision there were houses, scorched and uninviting, and an offensively white, far too large bridge spanning a dribble of muddy water. Her eyes wandered back to the hotel and the doors that swung rhythmically to and fro. As the doors swung the old lady rocked and the mosquitoes droned louder and more insistently. Along the road a car passed, loading the air with dust. A listless horse, ridden by a listless butcher's boy in a blood-spattered white coat and bedraggled blue apron, went by. The horse made plip-plop sounds as it ambled in the dust, and the dust rose in thick, murky spatters.

The old woman watched the horse and the boy out of sight and sighed for no reason whatsoever, and left off fanning to fold her hands in her lap. Then she tried to think of a subject on which to concentrate. But all she could think of was stout. Stout, dark and cold in a bottle; stout, richly brown, tipped by cool froth in a glass; stout, smoothly slipping down her hot, parched throat. She stirred restlessly. "It's a visitation from the devil", she told herself. Somehow the devil seemed a long way off and the hotel and the stout very close.

"It's temptation, it's temptation", she breathed, but she wasn't really thinking about that. Mentally she calculated the amount of money there should be in her old silk bag. Trembling, she got up and went down the steps to the front gate. She stood a moment, bare-headed in the sunshine, looking up and down the long road. There was no one in sight.

She laughed, a care-free crackling sound, and, turning, trotted back into the house. The black silk bag was hanging by its ribbon string across the bedpost. She opened it and took out a two-shilling piece. Then she found her large straw hat and hastened back to the gate. She paused, chuckling wickedly. It was years since she had felt like this. She clutched the coin in her hand and with the other hand lifted the latch of the gate. As she did so a cloud of dust in the

distance took her notice. She watched a figure materialise out of it. "Best wait till they go past", she muttered, feeling annoyed and more thirsty than ever.

"Stout is good for you", she told herself firmly as she waited. "My old mother said so, and there wasn't a wicked bone in her body." She nodded her head. "Not a wicked bone", she reiterated.

The figure moved rapidly. It was soon apparent that it was a woman, trim and angular, dressed in a neat blue print frock and flower-wreathed straw hat, and protected by a large sombre sunshade. The old woman started. "Lucky *she* didn't catch me coming out of the hotel", she thought. "She'd a told everyone on me." She looked across at the hotel uneasily. The swinging doors were subtly inviting.

The woman was close now. She wobbled her sunshade at the old woman and bawled out: "Yer oughtn't ter stand around in the sun. It'll strike yer dead before yer know where yer are. Gotter go down town for a bit of meat. Yer oughta come along to the meeting in the Parish Hall on Wensdee. Liven you up a bit. Livin' so much alone's no good to anyone. It'll drive you to the rat house." The woman continued her way as she spoke, so that by this time she was out of hearing. The old woman watched her stiff retreating back until she rounded a corner and was gone. There was no sign of anyone or anything on the long, straight road. The old woman lifted the latch irresolutely and opened the gate. But she did not move to go through the gate. She stood trembling a little, one hand on the open gate and the other clutching her two-shilling piece, staring at the hotel.

"There can't be any harm in a little drop of stout", she whined. "Surely an old woman like me don't mean any harm by it. It's just a drink, a cool drink to keep out the heat. I'm so hot; it's awful hot weather for an old woman like me." But she still stood staring at the hotel and clasping the money in her sweaty hand. She stood uncertainly for ten minutes; then a sudden rush of sound came to her ears, an indefinite sound that came on the air thickly, like a cloud.

"The kids are out of school", she said. "I can't go now till they're past. Such tongues the children have these days."

She let the gate slam closed and went back to her chair on the veranda, feeling relieved at the postponement, though she wanted the stout more than ever.

She sat in her chair and rocked, while the mosquitoes buzzed insistently and the hotel doors swung invitingly. God and the devil each did a little jig in her brain. The children went past in twos and threes, till at last the road was clear again. She still sat, rocking uncertainly to and fro.

The sun began to fade and in the heavy stillness of late afternoon the drone of the mosquitoes rose to a roar. The old woman rocked and watched the swing doors till finally it was closing time and the men came out of the bar and the doors were bolted behind them.

When I was young, cold Death seemed far away,
So cunningly he slipped from tree to tree,
Betwixt me and the sun, at Blind-Man play;
His net in hand, should I attempt to flee.

Now I'm grown old, we use none other game,
But only change the parts we lately did pursue:
Again we flit—the tricks are all the same—
Save Death runs free. 'Tis I who hide from view.

HUGH MCCRAE.

AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE, 1941.

By H. M. Green.

This is the third of our annual summaries, though four years have actually been covered, since, owing to the writer's illness in 1940, the publications of that year and of 1939 were grouped together.

In quantity and quality the literary production of 1941 was about average, but the year was interesting for several reasons. War conditions helped local literary production, because of the difficulty of importing books from overseas. But this does not account for the interesting fact that for the first time in many years books of verse easily outnumbered novels. In 1939 it was possible to write that "almost all our writers turn naturally to the novel". But actually a swing over to verse had begun even before that year, and in 1940 more books of verse were published than novels, and in 1941 almost twice as many.[1] The gradually reawakening interest in verse has no doubt been stimulated by the increasing output of the younger English and American poets, whose "modernism" also is being more and more followed in this country; behind that one can go no farther than to recognise the beginning of one of those swings of the literary pendulum that occur periodically through the ages. There are signs that the short story also may be due for a revival.

In 1941 there appeared no novel as striking as Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* (1938); the best novels of the year are, however, comparable with the best of 1939-40. And in verse there was no new book so good as FitzGerald's *Moonlight Acre* (1938) or Slessor's *Five Bells* (1939). But several important collections were published of both prose and verse.

The outstanding event of the year in the poetic world was the publication of Bernard O'Dowd's *Collected Poems*. At last the records of all the campaigns of the old field-marshal of Australian poetry have been gathered under the one cover,

[1] In making the notes on which this article is based a complete entry of all publications was not attempted. But I think it may be taken that no publication of any real literary value has been omitted, and that the figures are near enough for the present purpose.

together with the theory upon which they are based. That ardent little thesis urging the postponement of poetry until the coming of the Coquecigrues; those burning passages of metrognomic wisdom in which the veteran did his best to apply his precepts, and failed only here and there when the poet in him insisted upon breaking through; the splendid if here and there a little parochial *Bush*; the not yet properly appreciated *Alma Venus*; and, sprinkled everywhere, sometimes like jewels in sawdust, those brilliant epigrammatic images which no Australian poet has equalled. Now we need no longer hunt for our favourites through all those thin paper booklets. It was high time.

Two other timely collections have appeared. The first is of F. T. Macartney's poems, which again had been available only in a number of booklets, all out of print. Corrections have been made and a few poems have been added, these not among the worst. The other collection is the first of a series of annual verse anthologies—*Australian Poetry, 1941*; it is compiled by Douglas Stewart, editor of the Red Page of the *Bulletin*. The most notable poems in this anthology are Devaney's *Beauty* and Stewart's own *Unknown Soldier* (from the book of that title, 1941), which gains by condensation; but a fairly high level is maintained. And the anthology is the more interesting in that it reflects a "modernism" which was much rarer in this country a few years ago.

Of our older established poets only one, L. H. Allen, published a new book during the year. In the general tone of his poems and many of his mannerisms, Allen is a Victorian, or even pre-Victorian, romantic, though on the intellectual side, but here and there he uses a quite modern freedom. The best of the poems in *Patria* are the least serious; for example, *The Queen of Punt*. From a younger generation several books have come, however. In his *Emu Parade*, Tom Moore, who enlisted in the A.I.F. as a gunner but transferred to the Army Education Service, consolidates the reputation gained by his *Adagio in Blue*, and takes in new territory. In *Royal* and *Poems from the Mask* Mary Finnin and Leonard Mann respectively have published more of those grave, austere, rather formal verses to which they have accustomed us; the two books are quite

different, though the same adjectives fit them. Neither poet is often lyrical, but Mary Finnin has two lovely lines, in which she tells how

> time, the wolf, keeps beauty still at bay,
> Lest loveliness should pierce his grey disguise.

In *The Wanton Goldfish,* a little book whose get-up is as delightful as its contents, Ronald McCuaig has turned for the time from modernistic realism to light musical lyric, which carries a seventeenth century reminiscence, but is otherwise almost timeless. The activities of the Jindyworobaks and Meanjins continue, and the Jindyworobaks are attempting to broaden and clarify their philosophy. Both these groups deserve every encouragement. It is true that the Jindyworobaks' Australianism, purged now of some of its eccentricities, is still rather narrow—for example, isn't Australian town and city life, that is, the larger part of Australian life, to count at all? And it is true that in spite of a few of Ingamells' poems and a clear-cut cameo or two of Mudie's, little that is in itself notable has sprung yet from the Jindyworobaks. This is true also of the Meanjins, though something out of the common might come any day from, let us say, Picot or Grano, and two interesting long-short poems have come from Queensland. One, *The Trojan Doom,* which is included in Joseph O'Dwyer's *Poems,* is a vigorous example of the effect of T. S. Eliot on the younger generation of Australian writers. The other, Brian Vrepont's *The Miracle* (which was actually published in 1940 and accidentally omitted from last year's article), is strongly "modernistic" in both tone and form, but in it natural and necessary oversea influences have been thoroughly assimilated, so that the result is individual and striking. Its defect is a sentimental exaggeration; for soil erosion, though it may represent tragedy, and large-scale tragedy, is yet remediable (as indeed Vrepont admits), and is being remedied in America; yet Vrepont treats it almost as though it ranked with the alleged "decline of the west". But the important point about these two movements is that each of them, whatever its products, represents an attempt, and a heroic attempt, to start something in the field of Australian poetry. That should be enough.

Of the books by new poets, easily the most important is the *Poems* of Lesbia Harford, who died fifteen years ago, and who had been published at last by the Commonwealth Literary Committee in an excellent selection by Nettie Palmer. Critics have admitted the charm of these poems, but have called them slight. Many *are* slight. Their author's talent was facile and artless, sometimes careless, and she struck the same note too often, though Mrs. Palmer's selection has largely remedied the effect of this. But every one of the poems in this book is sincere and fresh and natural, and here and there one rises to a lyric intensity that is rare. Other books by new poets include Shawn O'Leary's *Spikenard and Bayonet,* the most promising book of front line verse that has come out of this war so far, and *Dawnfire: Selections from Some Modern Australian Poets.*

Among the year's fiction, three books stand out; books so different that it would be very difficult to compare them. They are, alphabetically, Eleanor Dark's *The Timeless Land,* Kylie Tennant's *The Battlers,* and Frank Walford's *A Fool's Odyssey. The Timeless Land* is not only a novel but a work of scholarship; it is a study, both careful and imaginative, of Australia's first settlement, of the patient and heroic Phillip, of the literary and amusing Tench, and of other officers, and also of several of the aborigines who came into close contact with the white invaders. But the book does not quite come alive, like for example *A House is Built.* It is not without life and movement, but the characters merge with the rest of the shifting scene. They do not move against a background; it is as though the book were all background. Nevertheless it is a notable achievement. *The Battlers* lacks something of the fresh vigour of Kylie Tennant's first novel, *Tiburon,* but it shows an increased mastery of the novel form. The book is an Australian analogue of, though it does not look in the least as though it had been suggested by, Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*; that is, it deals with the disinherited of this country as the other book deals with some of the disinherited of the United States. If *The Battlers* lacks the power of *Grapes of Wrath,* it runs more naturally, and there is nothing about it of the *roman à thèse.* Perhaps its principal defect is that its characters do not develop; it is a picaresque novel of static characters and of

incident. But its people and its life impress one as real, and, though nothing is glossed over, the story remains delightful, and presents a true picture of part of the Australian countryside. As to the third book, it is hard to say whether it is an extremely realistic picaresque novel, or the autobiography that it purports to be. If the latter, many alterations of names and places must have been necessary, for the narrator, an adventurer in the Queensland of the nineties, in the course of his pearling, Chinese-running and other activities, killed a couple of men with knife or pistol. He is not one of Hemingway's monosyllabic brass-bowelled submen, but a human being, a frank and likeable young fellow, who thinks as well as acts, and the book is so crammed with life and energy that even the best of the others pales beside it.

It is strange that a book by our principal "Australian" novelist should not be worth special mention. *Moon of Desire* is a romantic, at times rather sentimental, love and adventure story of Broome, the pearl fisheries and Singapore. It is excellent in parts, but disappointing as coming from Katharine Prichard. Another historical novel, Ernestine Hill's *My Love Must Wait,* deals, though in a quite different way, with the same period as *A Timeless Land*; it tells the story, and in particular the love story, of Matthew Flinders. This novel is clever and vigorous, and it also is based on careful study, but the style, though vivacious and sometimes vivid, is strained and staccato; there is an obvious effort after effect. One other novel may be mentioned: Sarah Campion's *Mo Burdekin,* a pioneering story set in northern Queensland. It is interesting, though hurried in style, and might be called realistic if one could accept the Americo-Cockney dialect of most of the characters.

Last, but by no means least, comes *Coast to Coast,* an anthology of short stories which is to be the first of an annual series, though its range extends actually beyond the twelve months that it purports to cover. The collection, which is well chosen by Cecil Mann, makes it clear that the Australian short story is stirring with new life.

In the field of essays and criticism there has beeen one notable publication, as long overdue as O'Dowd's collected

poems. Vance Palmer has edited for the Commonwealth Literary Committee a collection of A. G. Stephens' essays, prefaced by a short critical biography. The work is well done, as one would expect of Palmer. The father of Australian criticism gets full justice; a little more than justice, perhaps, for Palmer says that "for all his partisanship (Stephens) showed no disposition to make swans out of his geese". Victor Daley went much nearer to the truth when he wrote of A.G. that

> A primrose by the river's brim
> A splendid sunflower was to him!

It says something for Stephens that he published Daley's satire in his own *Bookfellow*. Still, in spite of this tendency to find a Keats or a Shelley in Dingo Flat, and, in spite of several strange blind spots, a couple of which Palmer notes, A.G.'s services to Australian literature were almost invaluable. It is a pity there was not space to deal also with his queer and interesting personality, and with his editorial gift, which was quite out of the common. It is doubtful whether any literary page has ever surpassed A.G.'s Red Page at its height.

Professor Murdoch's latest volume of essays, *Steadfast,* represents, as he says, a record of what one Australian thought and felt about events during the first two years of war. Other books of essays, taking the term in a large sense, include A. D. Mickle's *Of Many Things*; *The Child Discovers Poetry,* an essay on literary aesthetics by Flexmore Hudson, together with a selection of verses by children whom he has taught; *Flaunted Banners,* a short account of the Jindyworobak Club and its philosophy by Victor Kennedy; and Brian Penton's *Think—or Be Damned,* a vigorous journalistic diatribe against "pride, patriotism, and other forms of respectable ostrichism practised in Australia".

GIRL AT PIANO.

By Hugh McCrae.

We were living in the Blue Mountains, at "Pencorse"; one of a row of houses, facing others, in a well-to-do tree-bordered road.

On the particular evening I speak of, it was dusk, with little to be seen except in-and-out silhouette. Everything in its daylight place; while memory assembled the rest.

I had gone to a shed, on a rise near the gate, for splinters and chips; and was at work by the flame of a match when the door, which was open, apparently moved itself more closely against the wall. Under the door were signs of trousers descending into thick boots mounted on clay and pine-needles recruited by the way.

Somebody?

The match burnt brightly, with half its length to go; but I made up my mind to choose my kindling at leisure, and return to the house. On the step, I hesitated because Judy's toy-horse was in the path; and I had begun to move again, when the man (from behind) lifted my overcoat, worn sleevelessly, off my shoulders, and ran, under it, flattening himself against the ground, out of the gate.

The coat refused to hide him: it stretched its arms towards me and exclaimed in its own language "Thief! Thief!" "Master! A thief!"

By this time, the night had grown powdery and soft, with beamless electricity, scalloped by leaves, turned into windmills of feathers tumbling confusedly round.

Although handicapped without glasses, my eyes were still able to distinguish the man who had caught up the handle of a truck, low-built, not very wide, under the trees: heavy, by the sound it made jolting out of a rut; and by the deep hum while tooling away.

I thought Miss Martin's "Yinnabarra Whisky", even mixed with port wine (which, according to connoisseurs, miraculised it into being "bad as the real thing"), had reopened the crack in

my skull, got by jumping our creek—33 feet—on "Boiler", 1903. But the man was dinkum homo; and his truck was dinkum, too.

So, there was my overcoat, lifting and turning in the gutter, although unable to leap the gate; while I rubbed at the seam in my head . . . and . . .

What-the-Hell-and-Mackaness was that?

A round thing, I had thought a ball; mate of Judy's horse

And, although I encouraged it, Heaven knows encouragement was never less needed—

It followed me down the drive flanking the side of the house. Balanced steadily; without any bias; hard at my heels.

At first, I backed like an angry dog; a frightened one: then turned coward and ran, without apparently gaining ground. Crouched, to save my upper structure; with hands pressed down; and knees over the kitchen pantry.

Scrambling, tumbling, flying, all the time.

Finally, in the shadow of the house, the ball automatically lit itself up with jets and blots of flame, and swept determinedly between my legs.

As I had always hated my mama, I couldn't call out "Mother!"; so I yelled

"HOO! HOO! HOO!"

"The rest is silence" (Shakspere): but Shakspere's outdated; and *our present author* insists there were pops, at intervals, all night, up Buggley Avenue, as far as Canon

Sinkum's place, where the road ends, and "Dead Horse Mile" begins.

*

*

*

Australians will remember this occasion as marking the initial morning delivery of the Hamawatu Goddess BOM: Tuesday, June 17, 1942; three and a half minutes past seven p.m., pukka Nippon time.

NYMPHS AND SHEPHERDS.

Nymphs and shepherds are no more,
What shall keep the world alive?
Nymphs and shepherds are no more,
Till the past again arrive.

Say not lost, but cupped in space,
All that was again shall be;
Nymphs and shepherds, gods and ghosts
Tread the round eternally.

Light herself holds errant life,
Bends the years to earth again,
Flying fast, and flying past;
Nymphs and shepherds shall remain.

"E."

TRUE ART AND FALSE CULTURE.

A Comment on the Jindyworobak Controversy.

An artist is none the worse for not being a sociologist, good or bad; but if he is a bad sociologist he may spoil his art—or so repel people by his bad sociology that they will ignore his good art. The Jindyworobaks, true artists by instinct, lay themselves open to injury by defective cultural dialectics.

"It has been a piteous custom to write of Australian things with the English idiom." If this is the Jindyworobak point, it is a sound one. There is nothing more deadening to any growing literature than the dull grafting of decayed poetical phraseology. This is particularly so in the vivid landscape of Australia.

Yet the point in itself is purely one of stylistic propriety. Words, the medium of poetic communication, must be true to their thought. Except where literary allusion may serve to heighten effect, it is fair to require that description should fit the theme: in Australian themes the images should be Australian. Insisting upon this, the Jindyworobaks deserve well of their country's literature; and, since poetical imagery grows slowly by the work of generations of poets, the small as well as the great, it is "far-sighted to encourage mediocre work" if it leads towards a true medium of expression for Australian scenes and thought.

Then how does this involve Australian culture? Only men who understand and feel the life and culture of their country can reject lifeless borrowings from literature written elsewhere and give direct utterance to the inspiration of their own surroundings. But what if the culture is undeveloped and must develop largely through the work of these poets? By analysing the elements of life in their country, the established forms and the lines of future growth, the human forces and the material influences, they may make an imaginative synthesis which will inspire them and their work. Rex Ingamells has tried to meet a logical and urgent need in "Conditional Culture": his poetry and his dialectics reveal his instinctive grasp of the Australian cultural position.

But the analysis of culture is too complex to allow easy generalisations, too difficult to permit impatience. The Jindyworobaks are safe in their attacks on second-hand "pseudo-European" imagery: they are on dangerous ground in their analysis of the Australian cultural elements.

In the first place, although the case for geographical adaptation is perfectly sound, it is fatal to overstress it, particularly if, by poetic association, this leads to a certain "landscape mysticism". Australia has natural features dominating the spirit of any who raise their

heads to look at it; but the mechanisation of modern agriculture does allow men to change the land to their own material advantage. It is true that soil erosion points to the need of cooperating with nature and drought proves that we are not yet entirely secure; but we are far from the aborigines who had to adapt themselves completely or die. Thus, while aboriginal art may influence poetic imagery, it is sheer unreality to take it as the only "distinctly and uniquely Australian culture". From the artistic point of view, in adapting ourselves in spirit to the strength and colour of the Australian scene, where our thoughts are cast, we can be stimulated by the art of the aborigines, who so perfectly adapted themselves to it. But to exaggerate this influence into a theory of culture, fleeing from the modern civilisation which is now Australia, will only stop its being taken seriously even where it is a valuable contribution, in the creation of poetic mood and imagery.

Secondly, in defying European influence, the Jindyworobaks do less than justice to the growth of modern English literature. In "debunking nonsense" they attack the unreality in Australia of the imagery of what they are pleased to regard as English culture, in terms of castles, ruins and old lawns. Certainly they are right to protest against such imagery where it appears; but that is solely a matter of poetic propriety. They are wrong in associating modern English culture with it. The thought and expression of the virile younger English poets, Auden and the others, will cover much in the life of this country; the same holds good of the best American poets; and Australia in poetry and in culture has a lot to learn from them. In imagery there is much to accept, since it suits our cities; in culture they are wrestling with problems, urban and rural, which are not so alien to ourselves. It is important that John Ingamells has made this point in "Cultural Cross-Section". The Jindyworobaks have a valuable part to play in stressing the Australian characteristics: they will only spoil their effect by indifference to movements elsewhere which can strengthen them.

True artists with defective cultural dialectics, the Jindyworobaks should hold to their poetic canons but be more careful in their sociology. Let them proceed much more, systematically with their analysis of cultural elements, accepting criticism where (as here) it is honestly meant to be constructive: then let them consider two suggestions. First, as they work towards a proper medium of expression for Australian scenes and thought, why should they not experiment still more systematically with style and imagery on typical themes? Conscious studies in expression ("variations on an Australian theme") are possible in a serious school of poets, who will always write their personal verse. Secondly, in going behind the imagery to the culture of their country, they may turn their poetic imagination to the scenes of Australia's past and present life, study the cultural content, and, if they gain inspiration from them, bring them to life in

their verse. Thus they will unite their historical feeling, which they reveal so clearly in their theorising, with their poetic creation.

This is where "Cultural Cross-Section", particularly the able "Bird's-eye View" of John Ingamells, appears as the response to a logical necessity. If it is followed by further poetic and cultural studies of the same kind, planned systematically and written with detailed care, the Jindyworobaks will still more justify their claims by their work.

A. H. McDonald.

ABORIGINAL.

(The Great Snake.)

Into a hole in the ground he went,
Into a hole and the darkness before him;
Into the hole he went and the dark
About him; into the hole he went
And the dark behind him.

No light of moon or sun
Went with him there;
Then with a rock earth closed him in.

Forever he sleeps, save that
Sometimes in dreams he turns.
Then the mountains are shaken.

Mary Gilmore.

THE RING.

OUR BEST POETS.

Six Australian Poets. By T. Inglis Moore. (Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1942. 7s. 6d.)

Mr. Moore's latest book is more than an essay on six of our poets. It has a foreword by C. Hartley Grattan, written four years ago, which displays that penetrating knowledge of our literature in relation to our life which has placed Mr. Grattan among the sound and stimulating interpreters of this Commonwealth—to Australians themselves no less than to his own countrymen. Mr. Moore also makes an introductory survey of some ten thousand words. When an Australian is impelled to write a novel or an essay he is still somewhat in the position of the housebuilder who has to fell the timber and dress the slabs of which his edifice is to be constructed. So! Mr. Moore seizes his axe and his adze and betakes himself to the Bush.

He begins gamely: "Australian poetry of the last century can hold its own, in its highest expression, with any poetry written during the same period in the English tongue." This is accompanied by a whack at the general Australian failure in appreciation of this purest of intellectual wealth; and continues: "Today, one of the most urgent necessities of Australian literature, therefore, is to establish a canon of 'major' poets that will affirm fresh and fitting norms of value to the benefit, not only of the poets concerned, but also of the national reputation."

It is encouraging, almost inflating, therefore, to note that we are far enough advanced in the imbricated processes of indigenous literary achievement to possess six modern poets of the magnitude of those chosen and to have in addition at least four others to challenge their inclusion in the galaxy. The selected include two lyrists and four of more Miltonic substance: Hugh McCrae, John Shaw Neilson, Bernard O'Dowd, William Baylebridge, Christopher Brennan and R. D. FitzGerald.

In his introduction the essayist impressionistically assesses these men's qualities rather than ranks them, and, since he is himself a poet, his prose has brilliance and warmth. He deftly marshals his predecessors in the field and sifts the testimony whether of Arthur Adams, H. M. Green and Nettie Palmer, or of P. R. Stephensen and Randolph Hughes, whom he rebukes for polemical railing. He pays due tribute to A. G. Stephens who so gallantly hoisted his lone banner of earlier canons. He does not overlook the service done by the lesser voices who pioneered with verse and ballad—figures brave against the dawn and enshrined in the consciousness of all those who cherish and derive inspiration from Australia's literature. He firmly disagrees with and reproves those who are ignorant of or false to the higher

Australian values. He looses such vigorous wallops on the dead-fish school of critics of our literature that it is to be hoped that he has firmly belted it into past history where it will cease to be obstructive of present development. This school continues faithfully to lay out our bygone poets—Harpur, Gordon, Kendall—like a necklace of fish stranded on the beach of a tideless sea, and with a mighty effort has reached as far forward as Lawson. In fiction *Geoffry Hamlyn*, *For the Term of his Natural Life* and *Robbery Under Arms* are given pride of place, and, as a concession, what the overseas pundits have said of H. H. Richardson is repeated. An article embodying these irrefutable facts is seemingly filed for ceremonial occasions. The London *Times* (or its Supplement) used it about ten years ago when there was an exhibition of Australian books in London, and again to mark our Sesqui. This school enthroned Adam Lindsay Gordon in Westminster Abbey. Mr. Moore justly lays much of the blame for such out-of-date and inadequate evaluation on Australia herself and the "sorry condition of our literary values." . . . "The failure to appreciate such a figure as A. G. Stephens . . . is the last and damning witness to appear against the national apathy to letters . . . Stephens and other critics have laboured in vain. Their criticism . . . has failed to reach England, to percolate to the Australian people, or even to make any serious impression on that section of it . . . commonly regarded as cultivated." Mr. Moore points out that this phenomenon is somewhat due to arduous pioneering conditions, and asks: "Why is it considered necessary to help pear-growers to live while poets are cheerfully allowed to starve?" So much for the introduction, which perhaps will be the most interesting section of the book to laymen.

Mr. Moore has eschewed trivial personalia, but certain facts regarding his subjects are generally known. The rare singing Neilson had a pitifully arduous life; Brennan, the genius and great scholar, was too big a whale to find full realisation in our shallow cultural sea. Baylebridge withheld himself from association with his fellow-writers, but those who had the privilege of his friendship found him sympathetic, generous and of rare understanding, and his passing in the prime of maturity is to them a deep personal loss.

The work of the two lyrists speaks or rather sings delightfully for itself. Most lyrists can be assimilated with ease, and enjoyed or not according to the taste of the reader. The other school of 'major' poets inevitably indulges in intellectual exhibitionism which demands more effort from their congregations.

Brennan's personality was so outstanding and outshining to those who had the good fortune to know him that with them it still overtops his poetry, while to those who did not know him it is a handicap to the appraisement of his work *per se*. The Pegasus mounted by O'Dowd and Baylebridge in each case is a sturdy animal with a strain of the Clydesdale, necessary to bear the bales of moral flannel or ancient armour with which these two knights of the soul have alloyed their

merchandise. O'Dowd, despite his erudition and sesquipedalianism (of which Joseph Furphy wrote in gleeful fellowship), has minted poetic gems that have become part of the fabric of our nationalism. Baylebridge made deep soundings. His weighty thinking was sometimes a shade more on the side of the troglodytes than of the seraphim, but in his latest work are stanzas that both comfort with their wisdom and please with their music, while in his earlier days he could throw off a charming local image such as:

> The flower-veiled parrots all adoze,
> Have put their parley by;
> And often a feeding possum shows
> Full in the old moon's eye.

FitzGerald's steed is really winged and has the paces of a Nullah-Mundooey. He demonstrates the equipment of an intellectual in rhythms and cadences as beguiling as the lyrists'. *Mary Ann Bell* is as rollicking a ballad as ever devised.

> . . . She is the prisoned sunshine that became
> delicate contour of escaping fire;
> she is the snowflake blown upon the flame—
> song and the melting wraith of song's desire.

Here we have music and magic, depth and lightness, in a poem that will toss many another about dancers high in the balance. This poet voices the melancholy realisation:

> And all the unconsidered things
> Whereof my life is made take wings.

Another FitzGerald is associated with the reiteration of this form of nostalgia; one of his beautiful quatrains on the subject begins:

> They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
> The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep.

Our FitzGerald resists:

> Time is a fool if he thinks to have ended
> One single splendid thing that has been.

And thus to the uplifting *Essay on Memory*. "For memory does not fail though men forget"—memory as the handmaid of thought: the processes of individual memory dissolving into racial memory so that we can almost catch the voices and feel the presence of our forerunners back to the Piltdown skull. The poet's conception becomes almost revelation—something to be used as a bulwark against the anguish of our ephemerality, our sense of futility in a situation where time alone can time outlast, which, in the long run, is the most poignant and baffling tragedy of human existence.

This review, however, is not to make another interpretation of the poets, but to draw attention to the excellence of Mr. Moore's. His detailed analysis is an elegant dish to set before practising poets. It bristles with illustrations of scansion, stresses and rhythm, and proffers charts of the scaffolding of poetic construction which are purely technical. Choriambics, iambics, pentameters, hexameters, anapestic

alexandrines with shortened feet—all the bipeds, quadrupeds or centipedes of the prosodical Zoo are illustrated in relation to the subjects of study. The common reader need not be frightened, however. "All the expense of one university education after another" has not turned Mr. Moore's into a garrisoned mind concerned more with academic preciosities and peccadilloes than with major manifestations of poetry. He does not probe too tiresomely into derivations and influences, nor make depreciation a synonym for criticism. He clearly recognises the spots on his suns and deals firmly with them, but his enthusiasm for poets and poetry remains splendid and unashamed. It is heartening that such a book should appear today: the rich subject matter and its vivid and authoritative treatment are a good augury for culture here and now.

MILES FRANKLIN.

POETRY UNREGIMENTED.

Dramas from the Sky, by Max Harris. (The Adelaide University Arts Association, 1942.)

Preferences, by Frederick T. Macartney. (Angus and Robertson Ltd., Sydney, 1941. 6s.)

First Eleven, by Richard of Handsworth. (Barn on the Hill, 1942.)

Emu Parade, by T. Inglis Moore. (Angus and Robertson Ltd., Sydney, 1941.)

The Disinherited, by Mary Gilmore. (Robertson and Mullens Ltd., Melbourne, 1941. 3s. 6d.)

Phantom, by Gina Ballantyne. (F. W. Preece Ltd., Adelaide, 1942.)

War, which has regimented so many things and pruned away variety, has not regimented poetry, as these six volumes bear witness: here narrative and lyric still range from the conventional to the revolutionary, and though the poet himself may be in uniform, his mind is free. War in progress has little apparent effect on some poets, while in the work of others its influence is all-pervading: to some it is only a transient spasm of madness to which mankind is subject and, because of its very transience, not of fundamental importance; to others its significance appears so overwhelming that nothing escapes.

In *Dramas from the Sky* Max Harris, well known as an editor of *Angry Penguins* and a contributor to the *Jindyworobak Anthology*, presents strangely contrasted splendour and triviality. Some of his work shows an imagination both subtle and powerful, delighting in complex and startling imagery, delving into the remote corners and hidden fastnesses of passion. But what is one to think of the trifling flippancy of the following "complete" poem?

GLOSSY LADY.

glossy lady, defying spite,
who can tell you the meaning of night?

Perhaps, however, a poet is entitled to his vagaries and one may overlook them in favour of his undoubted achievements. In "Invasion Threat", "By Light of Day", "Lines to a Lady", "Preparation" and "Acknowledgment", Mr. Harris fuses thought and emotion in finely-wrought expression that bears the authentic stamp of poetry, as when he writes, of the stars,

> they despair in their diurnal course,
> but nightly weld their impulses abroad
> in the green avenues, on the tossed
> hair of sudden forests, with the force
> of glory—ivory on darkness inlaid,

or in "Acknowledgment",

> I have been brought near the regions of delight;
> sometimes it is the modulation of a voice, or a movement;
> and perhaps in the shadowy pleasure of sight
> I should be content, nor want the rapture, the tactual consent.

"The Pelvic Rose", preceded by an explanatory note, is apparently regarded as the most important poem in the book, but readers who are unabashed by its sexual (Mr. Harris prefers to call it "biological") imagery may well be repelled by its wayward involutions. The general impression it leaves is one of alternating hideousness and weird beauty, a probing of the unseen places of the spirit expressed in terms of the body.

Opinions of Mr. Harris's work will vary greatly, but even those who would condemn, cannot ignore it. His sincerity and genuine feeling are always evident, and in "Myth" he expresses his faith in the motive force of poetry:

> My music was to give and not to take,
> creating that would change the course of acts,
> not record them like the clock or death
> that see things true, but always just the same.

The Adelaide University Arts Association is to be congratulated on publishing this volume, and by its enterprise sets a worthy example to similar bodies in other universities.

Frederick T. Macartney's *Preferences*, "a definitive selection from verse written in the course of about twenty years", breathe fresh air and sunshine after the lightning-cleft darkness of Harris's verse. Flowers and birds, colour, the sea, the exquisite agony and brevity of love and beauty—these are Macartney's themes, and both his choice and his light-hearted treatment of his subjects remind one instantly of Herrick. In verse form he is an experimentalist, with a gift for the deft handling of words, and though in a few sonnets he adheres to established forms, in most of his poems he flirts gaily with assonance and rhyme. It is, however, Macartney's whimsical fancy, tinged with satire, that is his distinctive quality and constantly delights with unexpected twists and turns. In "Thoughts for Pansies" he writes:

> This is for pansies
> And their way
> Of watching you with dusky glances
> Like ladies bowed in church to pray—

> Though here and there is one that ogles
> Pedestrians with a bizarre
> And sumptuous innocence, as of goggles
> Of a magnate in a motor-car.

This is typical of the gaily mischievous touch apparent in most of Macartney's poems. Here and there he strikes a more serious note:

> I seem to beat bare fists against this night
> Studded as with a dark door's ancient nails
> Making it quite invincible. What ails
> The world or me?

But seriousness is only momentary, soon swept aside by the realization that life is brief and its joys fleeting. Macartney's poems are lovely trifles, not for those who seek to fathom in poetry the depths of thought or feeling.

Lovers of fine things will appreciate Richard of Handsworth's *First Eleven*, a tiny volume of only eleven poems, beautifully produced and hand-printed on fine paper. The author, whose *nom de plume* provides the curious with food for speculation, is obviously one of those rare creatures who prefer quality to quantity, for which restraint the reader harassed by the output of the printing press cannot but be grateful.

The influence of the metaphysical poets is apparent here in the expression of the complexity of passion—a complexity puzzling in the third poem of the series, "*Bacio di bocca spesso cuore non tocca*", but fully resolved and firmly stated in the fourth, "Covenant":

> I do not seek to hold your heart
> As a full blossom in my hands of love;
> Nor thus to be possessed, nor thus possessing, part
> You from yourself. I do not seek
> Your suffrance, nor your favour, nor surrender meek
> From this your love of me. For love is never
> More of a bond to hold than blade to sever.

In striking contrast is the "Oration before the provinces", which ends on a bitterly mordant note:

> And do not forget that you owe to the city-dwellers
> These and innumerable other advantages
> Too verminous to mention,

and the volume closes with a highly elaborate "Pastoral" in which the reader not too remote from the nursery will recognize a childhood favourite disguised in wittily satirical form.

One awaits with pleasure and interest the appearance of more work by Richard of Handsworth.

Captain T. Inglis Moore's *Emu Parade* gives in its title a hint of the contents. The author was for a time a gunner in the A.I.F. (he is now an officer in the Army Education Service), and he has dedicated this book "To My Mates of the 2/9 Army Field Regiment, A.I.F.". Its five sections are headed by military terms, and all its poems have reference to war.

Change of theme has not effected any great change in Captain Moore's verse: it still surges with boundless energy, occasionally

pausing for reflection or to launch shafts of bitter satire. Perhaps anger is not the best material for poetry—its voice is at times too harsh and strident—and there is much anger in these poems: anger at the futile wrangling of politicians, clawing "like a horde of Kilkenny cats", anger at the muddling administration that blunts men's enthusiasm and fiery eagerness for war, anger at the blindness of civilians who will awaken "Only when bombed homes kindle Anger and grief". But beyond the chaos and anguish and waste of war we are shown a vision of the time when men

> Shall walk as free men in common journeyings,
> Down roads of peace, to certain toil
> And bright unshaken homes,
> Proud comrades in work as we in war,
> Linked no less in mateship,
> Laughing, unashamed, and fearless,
> The strong sons of our sunlit earth!

Rage betrays the poet at times into a savage and prosaic banality that is unworthy of him, and in general this volume does not reach the standard of Captain Moore's *Adagio in Blue*, published a few years ago.

In *The Disinherited* Mary Gilmore depends more on indirect than on direct narrative for her effect and handles with great skill the difficult task of telling a story largely by implication. Scenes and incidents from the life of a hunted man, an occasional reference to the past and a yearning hint of what might have been, build up a touching picture of a lonely hidden figure watching the happy comradeship of other men.

> In what dark nights of solitude,
> Craving for human kind,
> Against the candle light I watched
> A child's head on a blind.

A scene that lingers in the memory is that of the outcast watching a sleeping fox and hesitating to disturb it:

> Back I stepped; I could not drive
> Into that heart the stake
> Of fear, knowing how oft I, too,
> In dread had sprung awake.

Dame Mary Gilmore's sympathetic understanding of the troubled heart has never been more fully shown than in this poem, where in narrative interspersed with some lovely descriptive passages she tells with moving simplicity an intensely human tragedy.

Gina Ballantyne's *Phantom* exalts, in the Jindyworobak manner, the natural at the expense of the artificial, the virgin bush as compared with man-made cities; but it is not in her sometimes petulant attacks on the iniquities of man that she writes her best verse. Surely the critical reader cannot fail to scent some contradiction, some artificiality, in this decrying of the works of man, for when Miss Ballantyne writes,

> These words that in our brains we fashion
> and bid our tutored lips release,
> the subtlest waves of thought and passion
> may wireless down the centuries,

one cannot but reflect that words have rarely survived down the centuries except by mechanical means, and the printing presses that have recorded Miss Ballantyne's own poems do not flourish under a gum-tree on the banks of the Murrumbidgee. Miss Ballantyne and her fellow Jindyworobaks may deplore the evils of what we are pleased to call civilization, but are not thereby deterred from making use of its inventions. The poems in this small volume are uneven in quality and some of them lack finish, leaving a rather chaotic impression.

MARGARET WALKOM.

QUEENSLAND CRUSADE.

Meanjin Papers, No. 8 (April) and No. 9 (June, 1942). Edited by C. B. Christesen. (Brisbane. 2s. each.)

THE eighth issue of "Meanjin Papers", in the words of the editor, "enters the battlefield against some of our greatest intellectual evils". Vance Palmer assails the commercialism which, he considers, has led Australians to look upon the land "as something to exploit". Few will dispute that commercialism, in Australia, as elsewhere, has been inimical to cultural progress. Mr. Palmer, however, makes too much of a grievance of this. A national culture, after all, is the product of centuries of development and is usually the possession of old and populous countries. Australia has yet too short a history to have a considerable tradition of its own.

A writer who shares Mr. Palmer's belief that his compatriots have somehow been unworthy of their country is Rex Ingamells; but while "Battle" is a dignified lament, "Australian Outlook" is a wild denunciation. The diction is turgid and abstract, the imagery confused; and one suspects that all this vagueness of language is the result of vagueness of thought.

Colin Clark is another contributor who attacks commercialism, but, unlike Mr. Ingamells, he would have us draw upon the resources of countries with a rich cultural tradition. However, his solution for the problems created by commercialism appears, to say the least, inadequate. One appreciates readily enough that the spirit of craftsmanship is an important element in cultural life, but its encouragement through education or the immigration of craftsmen can scarcely avail against industrialism without drastic economic readjustments.

The most stimulating article comes from the pen of A. P. B. Bennie. His claim that a return to the Christian tradition would enable us to recover our reason for living is doubtless well-founded, but, because Christian dogma has been found wanting as an explanation of life, one can hardly agree that a return to the old position is "very possible". One feels, also, that in urging a reversion to Catholic Christianity, Father Bennie has overlooked the possibility of other solutions. If Communism and Nazism can become fiery faiths for the Russians and

Germans, why should not democracy provide a similar inspiration for the English-speaking peoples? This is a point on which one would like to hear the opinion of J. Hanson-Lowe, who replies to Father Bennie. Mr. Lowe, however, confines himself to the pertinent criticism that to invoke the Christian tradition as a fighting faith is to ignore an essential element of Christianity, the refusal to use violence even against an enemy.

Other prose contributions include "Culture and the Crisis", in which J. V. Duhig warns us against intellectual regimentation and a brief study by Brian Vrepont which has all the crudeness and monotony of that species of realism which dedicates itself to the "average" man. There are also two articles whose interest is chiefly literary: Nettie Palmer's "Letter to Tom Collins", which reviews the poetry of Furnley Maurice, and "The Audience is Australia", by John K. Ewers, which contains a short but balanced discussion of the writer's relation to his environment.

The poetry falls into two fairly distinct groups—the first and larger inspired by the war and kindred subjects, the second by personal, rather than general, situations and experiences. In both we find a variety of metrical experiments (not always happy in their results), a preference for startling and unusual images, the use of symbolism and abrupt transitions; above all, a sense of dissatisfaction and despair. This, of course, is deepest in the poems of the first group, where it is intensified by horror and disgust at the present conflict. Indeed, the reader is conscious of this feeling too much in these poems of war. A similarity of mood can be detected in Joseph O'Dwyer's "Elegiac", Godfrey Bentley's "Night Raiders", and Rex Ingamells' "Voice of the Crow". This even communicates itself to the "Occasional Poem" by Peter Miles, and "The Young Men Die", by Marceine Dickfos; but here the imagery is sufficiently arresting to diminish the sense of emotional uniformity. Because the experiences they express are more individual, I prefer the poems of the second group. In "The Phantom", by Brian Vrepont, the imagery, although somewhat forced, is intense and powerful. "Lyric", by "Casa", is in quieter vein. While it suffers to some extent from lack of clarity in the general outline, the versification is smooth and sure and the sentiment convincing. The best of these poems, however, and perhaps the best in the magazine, is "Dream of Old Love", by "Jael Paris". Spontaneity may be lacking, but the treatment is remorselessly real and the language simple and dramatic.

The prose of number nine of "Meanjin Papers" is confined to articles of a literary nature. Several questions of importance in modern literature are discussed. In his editorial C. B. Christesen comments on the absence of a large audience for poetry to-day; and, since it is often assumed that the fault lies entirely with the wilful eccentricity of the poet, he does well to stress that the loss of contact between the artist and the people arises from the character of modern civilization. Dr. Brasch's forthright "Letter to Tom Collins" deals with another

familiar subject, nationalism in art. His argument that an artist has to be genuine in order to be national is convincing. So, also, is his assertion that an artist who deliberately aims at being national only succeeds in being artificial; and this is a charge to which our Australian primitivists are plainly open. Art does not depend upon externals but upon what is ingrained in the race. As Dr. Brasch points out, no aboriginal cult, even though it exists in the land we inhabit, can be as real to us as the inheritance of our European past.

Other contributions, which are not controversial, comprise three articles on poets who have died in recent months. H. M. Green's study of Furnley Maurice covers all important aspects of this writer's work. The quotations are so wisely chosen that readers who do not know Maurice's poems will wish to make his acquaintance for themselves. Firmin McKinnon is the author of an instructive survey of William Baylebridge. In this case, however, there are no quotations at all. Moreover, one fears that a critic who can dismiss the seventeenth century poets as cold and artificial is slightly unsympathetic towards their disciple. The third of these articles, by James Devaney, is a tribute to Shaw Neilson.

The poetry in this issue, like the prose, is not directly inspired by the war or contemporary conditions. One of the best poems, "Pastoral", by Muriel Armstrong Lewis, does, indeed, hint darkly at the menace of war in the last stanza. However, the real theme is rural peace and beauty. There is a tinge of Sitwellian artificiality both in the poise of the stanza and in the imagery. But even some of the most singular images have their own quaint felicity. Moreover, in one stanza at least, Miss Lewis evokes the very atmosphere of a country night scene in language that is simple and unaffected:

> Tendrils of mist entwine the moonlit wheat.
> Noises of small wild feet
> Scurry through high bleached grass.
> Swans call and pass.

Another poem which compels attention is Max Harris' "Parting at Dawn". It has some qualities which deserve high praise, such as concentration of imagery and the power of wringing an evasive music from diction that is spare and disillusioned. On the other hand, certain of Mr. Harris' figures are inept and strained, while there are times when one is uncertain whether he is enigmatic or merely obscure. This difficulty does not mar the reader's pleasure in R. G. Howarth's "So Pure the Flame", in which style and treatment are reminiscent of the metaphysicals. Mr. Howarth achieves the poise as well as the fusion of intellect and emotion typical of seventeenth century poetry. "Australia", by Peter Miles, shows a gift for conveying sensations effectively; but the general impression is too indefinite, a defect partly due to the lack of a regular rhythmical pattern. Yet another poem which requires mention bears the provocative title, "As Good As Any Other Poem About the Sea". Most readers will agree that this needs

qualification. The underlying idea is crude, not to say coarse, and the expression is sometimes commonplace, as in the line:

Like petty child you sulk when leaden clouds will frown.

Nevertheless, the poem as a whole reveals vigour, originality, and an unusual command of words. There are also two contributions by Mary Gilmore, one of which, "Singing the Knees", interprets a native ritual song in a simple and flowing verse form.

Mr. Christesen asserts in his editorial that the "Meanjin Papers" are "already accepted as part of our contemporary Australian literature". This is a bold claim, but, after reading these issues, one is convinced that it is, on the whole, justified. A few poems of considerable merit have been published. Much of the remaining verse reaches a high standard. Of the prose, the critical articles are sound and informative and others, which discuss contemporary problems, possess an intellectual vitality that is much needed to-day. It should be added that the magazine is the more satisfying because the editor has included work of great diversity in subject, matter, and outlook. "Meanjin Papers" promise to become a stimulating influence in Australian literary life.

C. J. H. O'Brien.

ADDRESSES TO THE ASSOCIATION.

May–July, 1942.

Under the pressing need for economy, it has been resolved to discontinue the issue to members of offprints from *The University Union Recorder* containing reports and summaries of addresses. In their place, abstracts will be provided in each number of *Southerly*. Reports will continue to be printed in *The Union Recorder*.

The following are abstracts of three addresses delivered since April.

"*The Importance of John Donne.*"

May 27: Mr. W. Milgate, B.A.

In this century, for the first time since his own day, John Donne has emerged as a landmark in our literary development, and great importance is now given him as man and artist. As a personality he provides a fascinating study, while his life is vividly representative of his age. His experience was deep and varied; he often anticipated his contemporaries in sensing the full import of the movements of thought and feeling of the day, he responded to them more intensely than others, he used what was perhaps the finest intellect of the day to define and dissect his experience, and he had the expressive power to communicate, in the forceful idiom he hammered out for himself,

many of these perplexed passages of the human spirit with unique clarity and vividness. His literary work shows similar range and intensity. He raises so many fundamental questions of form, subject-matter and imagery in poetry, that it becomes a testing ground for critical opinion, revealing in sharp outline the powers and failings of the critic. Modern criticism has removed most of the barriers to the appreciation of his work, and many of the most fertile and revealing of our modern ideas on poetry have been struck out in discussions of his work and achievement. While in prose he merely indulged brilliantly and fitfully in the practices of his age, in verse Donne was important as a great innovator and reformer. He was stirred equally by ideas and the experience of sense and passion, and sought a method by which metaphysical thought and concrete fact could be fused and realised in lyric poetry. First he adopted a dramatic method to give the necessary emotional drive; the lyric is founded in a dramatic situation and its course is determined by the "naked thinking heart" of the chief actor in the episode. The dramatic realism is heightened by a kind of passionate argumentation, by a complexity of mood, and by the choice of lively and colloquial language which in movement and intonation aims at reproducing the authentic accent of the speaking voice. The second step in fusing his material involved a very personal and ingenious use of the conceit. His figures of speech are used to project the feeling, and have an intricate relevance in the poem, as well as precision and intellectual depth. In tone, mood, imagery, rhythm, structure, diction, subject-matter, and stanza form, Donne opened up new paths of development in the lyric, and his influence lasted throughout his own century, being revived in ours. His chief importance lies in the amatory and religious verses he has contributed to our literature; though unequal in quality, they contain many beauties, from their breath-taking openings to the neatly-turned conclusions, But, though he invented a brilliant technique for expressing the simultaneous action of conflicting moods or elements of experience, Donne lacked the controlling sense of art needed to tame that technique into constant obedience. For his own achievement, however, and for what he has caused to happen in our literature and criticism, Donne has won a place of lasting importance.

"*Virginia Woolf: Between the Acts.*"

June 24: Miss Nuri Mass, M.A.

Between the Acts, Virginia Woolf's last novel, published posthumously in July, 1941, is a book not of fulfilment but of preparation, the whole complex system of human emotion behind the scenes of outward behaviour culminating in it with the mere statements that "The curtain rose. They spoke." Of what this speech consisted and to what it ultimately gave rise Mrs. Woolf does not—perhaps could

not—tell us, for undoubtedly her inability fully to capture or communicate her vision of the true nature and meaning of life runs parallel to Miss La Trobe's; and Miss La Trobe, though able, in the end, to glimpse the setting of a pageant which might at some future time express her vision, cannot determine what its first spoken words might be.

Owing to this consciousness on the author's part, conveyed through each of the several characters, of the limitations in the human instruments alike for perception and for expression, *Between the Acts* is one of the most sorrowful books ever to come from Virginia Woolf. It is fraught with an agonizing sense of incompleteness and frustration, and with a spirit of doubt which, penetrating to the core of every theory, institution or belief in any way capable of alleviating the burdens of mortal life, threatens to corrode all possible security and peace. Moreover, transparent as are rendered all those barriers which normally separate men and women from one another and keep private their innermost feelings, the relations between the characters in this book remain stunted and conventional.

Along with this pall-like spirit of weariness and doubt is a sharp note of bitterness. And herein lies one of the main differences between this and any other novel by Mrs. Woolf. Miss La Trobe's pageant, which occupies roughly half the total length of the book and influences the characters' minds as much as it has done the title, aims at a wholesale repudiation of the feelings and practices of the human race in all ages, and even the gramophone music, which is intended to resolve the discord by producing amongst the audience a sense of constructive unity, cannot deaden that loud vindictiveness of the megaphone's "anonymous bray".

Despite this grave fault, *Between the Acts* does emerge as a noble work, testifying to the author's consummate understanding of the most secret minutiae of human feeling, and to her powers of at once microscopic and expansive vision as well as to her genius as a literary artist, and thus representing far more than her ultimate failure to grasp the essence of her vision.

Ostensibly, the theme of this book constitutes the rather drab and commonplace happenings in an English country home during one day in 1939. Actually, it involves an examination of the most private, complex and tenuous of human thoughts and emotions as well as yet another statement of Mrs. Woolf's abiding conviction of the immortality of mankind. Giles and Isa, Lucy, Bartholomew, Mrs. Manresa and William Dodge, Miss La Trobe, and even the many unidentified members of the audience are felt to be the heirs and epitomes of all experience and of all time. And it is both within and as a result of this vastness and complexity that human life is renewed and perpetuated. If Virginia Woolf did not, in this book any more than in all the others, possess herself of the whole body of her vision, she certainly did lay hold upon its fringe.

"*Hebridean Lore and Legend.*"

July 22: Mr. Clement Hosking.

The Outer Hebrides, once called the Hebudes, have no commercial value, and have not been spoiled by tourist traffic. The language of the people is Gaelic, though most of them can speak English, and tales are still told round the fire as of old. Scraps of Macpherson's "Ossian" can still be picked up there, and it has been proved that Macpherson's stories were genuine. Dr. Alexander Carmichael in his *Carmina Gadelica* and Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser in her *Songs of the Hebrides* have helped to recover the treasures of Hebridean folk-lore. Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser's songs contain legends which the Reverend Kenneth MacLeod, a Gaelic scholar, had collected from the people and translated. In his translations (published in a book called *The Road to the Isles*) MacLeod frequently preserves the internal rhyme and alliteration that are characteristic of Gaelic poetry.

Many of the tasks of primitive people, such as weaving, spinning, and milking, are rhythmical, and singing helps in their execution. The Hebrideans have such "labour songs", as well as wedding songs, christening songs, and songs for the dying and the dead. The Ossianic songs, which probably came from the early Irish civilization, are grander than the legends of the people. An elaborate ritual must be performed before they are recited, and the tale may last a week; but such recitations are fast dying out. The Hebrideans have a deep-rooted faith in the supernatural, and believe in the existence of fairies, witches, mermaids, and seal-women. Many of their legends are based on these superstitions.

T. G. Herring.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Australian English.

To the Editors of *Southerly*.
Dear Sirs,

While our forces are pounding the enemy with every ounce of their strength, are the home grocers and others pulling their net weight? Not altogether: their labels are libels—on our language. Every day, more and more, I notice, as contractions, on jars, tins, bottles (some syrup for my cold), the false plurals "ozs." and "lbs."; and, if I went in for heavier fare, I should no doubt be shocked, equally, by "cwts." Such would be insupportable!

I am,
Yours s-sensibly,

Pedant.

NOTES.

Donations to "Southerly".—The following are to be thanked for donations made since the last issue: Miss F. Colebrook, Miss L. Dunster, Miss Thelma Herring, Dr. A. G. Mitchell, Miss Janet Stephen, Rev. Dr. G. W. Thatcher.

April "Southerly": Corrections.—On page 16, for "Messerschmidt" read "Messerschmitt"; page 34, for "second" read "first"; page 35, at middle, for "Miss" read "Mr.".

Two suggestions by a reviewer of this issue have now been adopted: that the type used for titles be lightened, and that the general heading of the review section be changed. Further suggestions for the improvement of the publication will be welcomed.

"Meanjin Papers".—This magazine, published every two months, may be obtained from the Editor, Mr. C. B. Christesen, Box 1871 W, G.P.O., Brisbane. The annual subscription is ten shillings, the price of single copies two shillings.

"Coast to Coast", 1942.—Contributions are invited for the second issue of *Coast to Coast*, an Australian short story anthology intended to foster Australian literature by giving permanent form to the best work of the year.

Writers should submit no more than two or three recently written stories. Work already published in newspapers or magazines may be submitted and stories not used will be returned. A gesture payment of two guineas will be made for any story accepted.

Contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Australian Short Stories, 1942, c.o. Angus and Robertson Ltd., 89 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

"Julius Caesar".—The following is from a review in *Notes and Queries*, January 31, 1942, of Mr. S. Musgrove's lecture on *Julius Caesar*, published by the A.E.A. last year.

"We were specially interested in Mr. Musgrove's remarks on what he calls buffer scenes, short scenes which, in modern productions of Shakespeare, are most often left out. . . . The device may well be thought less useful in the modern than it was in Shakespeare's day, yet, that even the modern theatre loses something if these scenes are omitted may be gathered by observing whence it comes that 'Hamlet' given quite without cuts is so incomparably more effective than 'Hamlet' as now commonly played."

"Macbeth".—Copies of Professor Waldock's public lecture on *Macbeth* are available from the Hon. Secretary, from Miss Herring at the University, and from booksellers. The price is 1s. (postage 1½d.).

Poetry Readings.—Under the aegis of the Association, a series of Lunch-Time Poetry Readings has been arranged. They are given every fortnight at the E.F.G. Library, Martin Place. All interested are welcome. Original verse is read. Writers who have so far been heard are: Miss Rosemary Dobson, Captain T. Inglis Moore, Mary Lang, and R. G. Howarth.

The Hon. Secretary *pro tem.* is Miss F. Earle Hooper.

Tennyson.—On October 6 falls the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Tennyson. *Quantum mutati ab illo!*

"*Angry Penguins.*"—Number Three of *Angry Penguins*, edited by Max Harris, has just been received. It will be reviewed in the next issue of *Southerly.*

Annual Dinner.—The Annual Dinner of the A.E.A. will be held on Thursday, November 19. All those intending to be present should inform the Hon. Secretary as early as possible before that date.

Binding of "Southerly".—The binding of members' copies of *Southerly* will be arranged on request. Volumes One and Two can be bound separately, or in one volume, in blue cloth, at the following rates: Volume One, seven shillings; Volume Two, seven shillings; Volumes One and Two together, eight shillings and sixpence. Orders and copies may be left at the University with the Editors, or Miss Herring.

Volumes already bound in blue cloth are obtainable at the following rates: Volume One, thirteen shillings; Volume Two, eleven shillings and sixpence; Volumes One and Two, nineteen shillings.

SUBSCRIPTION LIST.

CONTRIBUTIONS to enable the Association to carry on its work should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. F. T. Berman, at 55 William Street, Roseville; or they will be received by him in person at any meeting.

The following donations have already been made:

	£	s.	d.
Mr. A. D. Hope	5	0	0
Mr. H. L. McLoskey	2	2	0
Mr. H. J. Oliver		10	0
Mr. I. R. Maxwell		10	6